

months. Now it appears that in point of fact every fourth Sed festival was marked off from its fellows by the adjective *tep* or "chief," and that these "chief" celebrations fell as a rule in the years when Sinus rose on the first of the month.¹ These facts confirm the view that the Sed festival was closely connected with the star Sinus, and through it with Isis.

However, we are here concerned rather with the meaning intention and the rites of the festival than with the reasons for holding $f_{est} \setminus \wedge j \sim t^e_0$ it once every thirty years. The intention of the festival renew the seems to have been to procure for the king a new lease of *ungs* life, a renovation of his divine energies, a rejuvenescence. In the inscriptions of Abydos we read, after an account of the rites, the following address to the king : "Thou dost recommence thy renewal, thou art granted to flourish again like the infant god Moon, thou *cl*ost grow young again, and that from season to season, like Nun at the beginning of time, thou art born again in renewing the Sed festivals. All life comes to thy nostril, and thou art king of the whole earth for ever."² In short, on these occasions it appears to have been supposed that the king was in a manner born again.

But how was the new birth effected? Apparently the The king essence of the rites consisted in identifying the king with $\wedge \wedge thei$ Osiris ; for just as Osiris had died and risen again from the dead Osiris dead, so the king might be thought to die and to live again festival/ with the god whom he personated. The ceremony would thus be for the king a death as well as a rebirth. Accord- ingly in pictures of the Sed festival on the monuments we see the king posing as the dead Osiris. He sits in a shrine

like a god, holding in his hands the
crook and flail of
Osiris : he is wrapped in tight bandages like
the mummified
Osiris ; indeed, there is nothing but his name
to prove that
he is not Osiris himself. This entronement
of the king in
the attitude of the dead god seems to have
been the principal
event of the festival.³ Further, the queen
and the king's
daughters figured prominently in the
ceremonies.⁴ A

¹ W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, p. 180.

² A. Moret, *Du caractere religieux Abydos*,

de la royauté Pharaonique, pp. 255 sq. inserted at p.

³ W. M. Flinders Petrie, *Researches* p. 184.

in Sinai, p. 181.

⁴ A. Moret, *op. cit.* p. 240 ; Miss M. A. Murray, *The Osireion at*

pp. 33 sq. ^ with the slip

33 ; W. Flinders Petrie, *op. cit.*